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## NICK LAND: CAPITAL, TELEOPLEXY AND XENOSYSTEMS

ALL, ECONOFICTION ACCELERATIONISM, AI, CAPITAL, TECHNOLOGY, TELEOPLEXY

“Whilst Chinese materialist dialectic denegativizes itself in the direction of schizophrenizing systems dynamics, progressively dissipating top-down historical destination in the Tao-drenched Special Economic Zones, a re-Hegelianized ‘western marxism’ degenerates from the critique of political economy into a state-sympathizing monotheology of economics, siding with fascism against deregulation. The left subsides into nationalistic conservatism, asphyxiating its vestigial capacity for ‘hot’ speculative mutation in a morass of ‘cold’ depressive guilt-culture.” Nick Land

Nick Land writes: “Acceleration is techonomic time.” (Land 2014: 95) The etymological

reference here is on the one hand to “tech” (from Proto-Celtic tegos, from Proto-Indo-European tegos (“cover, roof”) = house) – and on the other hand to “nomic”, a word that in Greek means “law, custom” or the game in which one models certain aspects of a legal system when the players make their moves and at the same time change the rules of the game with them.

Land’s term “techonomic time” refers to a self-modeling capitalist system or its games, which dwell in digital machines and today take the form of simulated algorithms in order to eat their way through the accelerated rhythms of a self-manifesting intelligence in endless random play. It is precisely this reproduction of time, which manifests itself in the current accumulation of capital, that Land attempts to describe with the concept of acceleration. According to Land, in the course of capital accumulation and its capitalization processes, technological resources are increasingly diverted from consumption to the improvement of production and circulation techniques, so that although it is still possible to speak of a distinction between economy and technology in purely analytical terms, in reality the two areas can be described as co-components of capital. (ibid.: 95) Land’s confusion at this point consists precisely in conceptually separating capital and economy, while we assume that economy can only exist as that of capital. This is precisely why there is no need to ask the dialectical question of how capital can be itself and at the same time be something else (economy). For a conceptual, non-dialectical definition of capital, this must mean understanding capital as a radically unilateral “logic”, in which two terms are not unified by a third term (abstract labor), but are determined by the first term (money as capital). The terms (the second term is a commodity, production, labor power, etc.) and the relation money-commodity-money are immanent to the first term (capital). The second term is always already a unilateral clone of the first term, which means nothing other than that one must always start from a monetary theory of value or capital theory. And this as a determination-in-the-last-instance, so that capital is to be thought of a priori as total capital (and not as capital in general). And the mathematics of capital would have to be added to the concept of capital, i.e. the (conceptual) capital and its economic mathematics (differential calculus) would have to be superposed. The vectorial dimension of capital is thus complemented by the mathematics of economics.

For Land, acceleration articulates an artificial intelligence or a singularity that immanently unfolds in the processes of a self-modifying game in intelligent time. The time of pure acceleration begins precisely when, in escalating neo-capitalism, the enormous complex of information, data and knowledge grows together with so-called artificial intelligence, and only then, according to Land, are we dealing with an indeterminate time of kairos or a process time without end, which unfolds not in chronological or everyday time, but in the occurring moment itself, whereby the qualitative forces of an immanent materialistic libidinal complex ek-sist in their singular manifestation in kairos. (Chronos as the god of time was presented in Greek myth as a god with three heads, namely that of a man, a lion and a bull. Chronos and his consorts circled the original world egg in their coils and divided it to form the ordered universe of earth, sea and sky. However, the Greeks had another concept of time, namely that of kairos. Kairos is an ancient Greek word meaning to seize the right or opportune moment. Heiner Mühlmann has found the following catchy definition for kairos in the course of his definition of tychetechnics, a craft that processes chance: “The kairos is the crisis of a tychetechnical oasis phase.” (Mühlmann 2013: 27) While chronos alludes to a sequential time, kairos signifies a temporal derailment, the moment of an indeterminate time in which anything

can happen. What happens when one refers to kairos ultimately depends on the person who takes the floor. While chronos is quantitatively determined, kairos is a qualitative determination).

Two opposing trends need to be considered here: on the one hand, the de-acceleration of capital, which is expressed in the tendency of the general rate of profit to fall and leads to the indebtedness of states, households and companies; on the other hand, the acceleration of financial capital, which is based on computerization and cybernetic technologies and essentially also creates the new image of acceleration. However, the latter does not lead to the opening of new spaces, but for Land this type of acceleration is clearly connected to the closing of the horizon in capitalism – roaming horizontally across the globe and penetrating vertically into every pore of social life, we are dealing with a totalitarian immersion in the immanence of capital, whereby the processes of acceleration could also lead to the transcendence of capital. However, Lyotard's statement, which the accelerationists are taking up again today, namely that the flirtation with acceleration could produce its own *jouissance* (of resistance), has not proved to be true. The accelerationists' use of the word *jouissance* could also suggest the following: An enjoyment so intense that it is indistinguishable from pain, i.e. a kind of perverse masochism.

According to Nick Land, the totalitarian dominance of capital is a consummate teleological catastrophe. The transclassical capital machine enables the acceleration of the linear operation of digital images, writings, music – they are simultaneously present everywhere, can be called up at any time and are reversible, they come from a contingent abundance of possibilities, as it were, from the future into the present; thus future and possibility are to be regarded as synonyms, as are time and probability. The present is the realization of possibilities. Land writes that the present situation only makes sense if it is seen from the perspective of a future observer traveling back in time, and this in relation to a singularity that is only in the making. He ironizes the civilization that is already collapsing today as “meltdown acceleration, cyberian invasion, schizotechnics, K-tactics, bottom-up bacterial warfare, efficient neo-nihilism, voodoo antihumanism, synthetic feminization, rhizomatics, connectionism, Kuang contagion, viral amnesia, micro-insurgency, wintermutation, neotropy, dissipator proliferation, and lesbian vampirism, among other designations (frequently pornographic, abusive, or terrorist in nature)”- (Fanged, KL 6134)

Land uses terms such as electrical circuits, cybernetic expected value, and computer algorithms to describe governance and its compensatory relations within an ongoing process of hypercapitalization that operates on multiple levels, from mathematical design to biotechnology to the entertainment industry. This process is a kind of cumulative and accelerating feedback process, but it is not possible without major disruptions, explosions and traps to control these disruptions. Just think of Fukushima and the corresponding disaster policies. Land considers controlled explosions to be necessary in this context, and he logically emphasizes the need for governance of the highly explosive forces of modernity. Today, the processes of control take place uniformly, i.e. linked to chaos-theoretical ways of thinking or those of contingency, which, however, remain committed to statistical-mechanical equilibrium, so that disturbances in the mechanical systems remain compensable, in that capital-technological machines based on probability keep the system governable. This is indeed a socio-economic normalization, the critique of which, according to Land, is provided by accelerationism. That secondary process of economic normalization, which attempts to

stabilize what Land sees as the original unrest in the systems through various compensation mechanisms, drags along the legacy of technical rationality as objectified domination, to use Marxist jargon. Land speaks here of the inert telos, which the accelerationists criticize when it is precisely the left faction that pushes for an uncompensatable disruption, but insofar as this remains unrealizable, the left itself can only be seen as an eternal critique of modernity. ("But those who rule are the heirs of all those who have ever triumphed ... Whoever has been victorious up to this day marches along in the triumphal procession that leads those who rule today over those who lie on the ground today. The spoils are carried along in the triumphal procession, as has always been the custom. They are called cultural assets." Walter Benjamin) At this point, Land is concerned with the attitude of the last man, which perhaps corresponds with Sloterdijk's comment on modernity as the production of the last man in the Nietzschean sense. In order to further twist the twisted intentionality of modernity under the cybernetic-capitalist regime, which articulates itself above all as the permanent self-generation and self-referentiality of the machine, Land uses the neologism teleoplexia: this term refers to an inverted, emergent and complicated teleology that culminates in an intensive quantity that is identical to machinic-cybernetic intelligence, i.e. complexity, connectivity, extropy, etc. The first achievement of teleoplexia is to be found in the production of the last human being. The first achievement of teleoplexy or accelerationism is the attempt to "measure" this intensive quantity, which is expressed economically as "productivity, competitiveness and capital investment value" (Land 2014: 99). In this context, Land identifies capitalization with natural-historical reality, which for him cannot be separated from teleoplexy as an intelligent economic phenomenon, whereby teleoplexy further complicates the economic situation through the factors of commercial relativism, historical virtuality and systemic reflexivity. Surprisingly, Land describes the virtual momet of capitalization somewhat accurately: "Capitalization is thus indistinguishable from a commercialization of potentials through which modern history (teleoplex) leans towards an ever greater virtualization that operationalizes science fiction scenarios as integral parts of production systems. Values that do not "yet" exist except as probalibistic estimates or risk structures are given a command over economic (and thus social) processes that inevitably devalue the actual. Under teleoplex guidance, ontological realism is decoupled from the present, making the question "What is real?" increasingly superfluous." (ibid.: 100-101) And further: "There is only the self-qualification of teleoplexy or cybernetic intensity, precisely what financial markets are (ultimately) good for." (We should therefore assume that synthetic financial assets have a far greater power of action than classical financial instruments (credit) and classical commodities, because the size (of economic objects) and the associated power of action is already a dependent variable of the relations and gradual connections of economic objects, whereby this is to be understood as a structural dominant. At the same time, it is the virtualization-actualization circuits of money capital that process as abstract risks and probabilities in order to monetize optional future-oriented exploitation now, and thus actually degrade the real economy to a derivative).

Finally, Land wonders how teleoplexy, as a research program that is permanently ready to measure and evaluate technological progress, could capture and further accelerate the explosion of teleoplexic cybernetic intelligence more intensively and effectively than has been possible with conventional methods of calculating price movements, which estimate rather than calculate the total value of capital using stochastic methods. Calculation can only take

place if the valuation of economic wealth is transformed into a new performativity that takes care of the self-quantification of teleplexy or cybernetic intensity, and this in turn can only be achieved via the topology of nomadic financial markets. However, prices and price systems would have to be discovered that would be compatible with “their own maximally accelerated technogenesis and thus lead capital into mechanical automation, self-replication, self-improvement and the way out called intelligence production.” (ibid.: 102) The price system ultimately culminates in a technological-self-reflexive hypercognition. To this end, it is necessary to coordinate the measurements of cybernetic intensity with those of capital composition, capital density and capital concentration, which cannot only refer to the outputs of classic legal enterprises, as this would still leave out the area of reproductive activities in private households, for example. However, it could be argued that the principle of voluntary associations remains dependent on autonomous motivations. If quantifying measurement instruments and monetary incentives are integrated into these areas, this can only lead to the abandonment of autonomous motives. The process of expanding the definition of GDP and including all forms of work, including unpaid work, as a new indicator should therefore be viewed critically.

For Land, a philosophy of camouflage is needed that is capable of deciphering the teleplexic forces or agencies that are already dormant in the global networks in order to ultimately promote and stimulate them. And Land again cites various factors that could inhibit the movement of the teleplexic AI singularity in the form of local defects or immense sabotage, namely states and their secret services, corporations, mega-cities and power-based networks or even left-wing accelerationists. These would tend to inhibit the market-specific signals of price movements and thus interrupt the important trends that could lead to condensed teleplex intelligence. Finally, Land tells us that the teleplexic movement must prevail because capitalism simply has no other choice: doom or technogenesis. However, the time could also come when the teleplexic systems separate themselves completely from the humanoids of the West, either in the embodiment of post-biological creatures that develop self-referentially from themselves, or as advanced artificial intelligent agencies. These would be so far removed from all human concepts, ideas and terms that they could only be manipulated beyond the infoborg with their own alien minds, or perhaps could still be used as tools before choosing their own escape routes from the networks to live their second infoborg life in real time. One could think of Google and DARPA far away, which are so interconnected today because of the monstrous technologies they use. It is easy to imagine that they could give rise to systems that we still have no knowledge of in order to protect ourselves from them.

When writing about geopolitical fragmentation, for example, Nick Land seems to be problematically open to right-wing tendencies in an otherwise more culturally political neoliberal faction of the Western community of values. Today, the super-rich and their experts read the right-wing accelerationist, who argues for hyper-secessionism, for the recognition of micro- and macro-fascisms (nationalism, racism). And keywords such as hierarchy, exclusion and secrecy point to the alliance of right-wing and left-wing accelerationists when it comes to propagating a future intelligence. But this is *sui generis* radically uncertain. (The most powerful hype in capital's agenda tends towards a transhuman and AI/robotic regime). While digital machines currently represent an expression of dictatorial arborescence that corresponds to capital's desire to devalue and simulate human thought, digitality, according

to left accelerationism, also indicates an open horizon: the potential for a radical transformation in modes of consciousness, forms of the common, cultures and music. But can technological machines be decoupled from capitalist axiomatics at all? Can the codes that program our planetary abstractions today be decoupled from the social forms of control? This is one of the questions that left accelerationism must face today. It is claimed that it is the universality of the Turing machine that opens up the possibility of reconstituting the conceptual, referential and compositional capacities of left forces by dramatizing the de-imaging of the human through the description and enactment of the powers of aliens. Allegedly, the abstractions of software are already linking our fragmented politics, our atomized solidarities and our stratified desires. In its virtuality, software refers to a universal revision, to the optimization, expansion and potentiation of the components and capacities of body-brain structures. However, there will be no common language between the brain and the computer, rather both will be involved in the creation of a new abstract machine to produce previously unforeseen mutations in the power of thought. The brain will not be replaced by the computer or reduced by it to a prosthesis, but it will be about its asymptotic, machinic extension and multiplication, perhaps beyond any existing model of cognition. Indeed, the mutant character of these abstract machines, yet to be constructed, would then indicate their profound capacity to go beyond all previous modalities of collective expression to generate new (artistic, scientific, philosophical) experiments, a new decoding of topological divisions, to finally generate a new joyful thinking without image, an indivisible science/art/philosophy in the making. This transhuman, left-wing position obviously has a lot to do with German idealism. However, Günther Anders had already pointed out in what he himself called his philosophy of discrepancy that there is a utopianism that can only imagine what it cannot produce, whereas today we live in an inverse utopia – we cannot imagine what we produce. In this sense, the response of left accelerationism to Land's fictional construction of a techonomic or teleopexic technogenesis is rather inadequate. Moreover, it is fully within the logic of the anthropocentric, a description that imagines a false complex of human activity, whose historical geography is naturalized and whose gravitational field, the accumulation of capital, is left in invisibility.

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